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"THE SYSTEM OF *SIRIUS* ACCORDING TO THE LATEST OBSERVATIONS."

Under the above title, Mr. ZWIERS has given, in a paper printed by the Royal Academy of Sciences of Amsterdam, the results of his second investigation of the orbit of the companion of *Sirius*. In this investigation he has made use of the meridian-circle observations of the principal star, and the micrometrical observations of the companion before periastron passage, and also those made after its rediscovery by Professor AITKEN, in the latter part of 1896.

The periodic time which results from this new investigation is 48.842 years. This is a smaller value of this element than has been previously obtained by any one. AUWERS's value is the next largest, being 49.399 years. From this the values obtained by various computers range up to 58.47 years. A number of the more recent orbits give about 51 or 52 years.

According to the elements obtained by Mr. ZWIERS, the distances, as measured at Mt. Hamilton, are represented in a very satisfactory manner. It will be remembered that these distances were called in question some two years ago, it being claimed by some that they were undermeasured. This appears not to be the case. Mr. ZWIERS states that they are in accordance with KEPLER'S laws, and that they fairly oscillate around the computed positions. The residuals which he has obtained, in the sense Observed – Computed, are given in the following table. In the first column are the dates of observation; in the second the residuals for the position-angles; in the third those for the distances; in the fourth the number of observations; and in the last the names of the observers:—

1896.920	— 0° 27	— 0″.06	4	SCHAEBERLE.
97.017	— 0 .83	+ 0 .03	8, 5	AITKEN.
206	+ 1 .84	— 0 .06	1	HUSSEY.
818	— 0 .38	+ 0 .07	4, 3	AITKEN.
839	+ 0 .34	— 0 .02	3	SCHAEBERLE.
940	+ 1 .72	+ 0 .02	3, 2	HUSSEY.
98.151	+ 0 .63	+ 0 .18	2	AITKEN.
737	— 0 .21	+ 0 .04	3	AITKEN.
785	+ 0 .86	— 0 .02	2	HUSSEY.
99.177	— 1 .76	+ 0 .24	1	AITKEN.
286	— 0 .04	+ 0 .06	3	HUSSEY.

In like manner, the residuals obtained for the observations made at the Lowell Observatory are—

1897.802	— 1°.52	+ 0″.67	4	SEE.
828	— 1 .35	+ 0 .99	2	BOOTHROYD.
98.273	+ 0 .52	+ 0 .73	3	SEE.
276	+ 2 .37	+ 0 .79	3	BOOTHROYD

Mr. ZWIERS's new elements are as follows:—

$$
\begin{array}{rl}
T = & 1894.090 \\
\left.\begin{array}{r} \Omega = \\ \pi - \Omega = \\ i = \end{array}
\begin{array}{ll} 44^\circ & 30'.2 \\ 212 & 6\,.4 \\ 46 & 1\,.9 \end{array}\right\} & 1900 \\
a = & 7''.594 \\
E = & 0.5875 \\
\mu = & -7^\circ.37069 \\
P = & 48.8421 \text{ years.}
\end{array}
$$

W. J. HUSSEY.

DEATH OF THE HON. T. G. PHELPS, CHAIRMAN OF THE LICK OBSERVATORY COMMITTEE.

The Hon. T. G. PHELPS, Chairman of the Lick Observatory Committee of the Board of Regents, died at his home at San Carlos on June 11th, from injuries inflicted by a recklessly-ridden bicycle.

Mr. PHELPS came of an old New England family, distinguished in the early wars of the country. He was born at Chenango, New York, December 20, 1824. In 1849, he came to this State, having been for some time engaged in the practice of law at his old home. After a short experience at the mines, he engaged in business in San Francisco, where he accumulated a competence. He took a keen interest in politics; was elected a member of the assembly, and later a State Senator. In 1875, he ran for Governor on the Republican ticket, but was defeated through a division in the party.

Mr. PHELPS was a Member of Congress from California during the Civil War, and was the trusted adviser of President LINCOLN in matters pertaining to the Pacific Coast. He was twice Collector of the Port of San Francisco. In 1880, he became a Regent of the State University, and in the absence of the Governor he presided at the meetings of the Board. When the Lick Observatory was transferred to the State by the Lick Trus-